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Senator Allen helps secure funds for isolated schools

LANSING – Schools in “geographically isolated” areas across northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula will see salvation following the passage of Senate Bill 1069, announced Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City.

Several school districts throughout Michigan that cover vast areas but have few students or encompass an island were hit hard by the recent budget cuts. DeTour Area Schools, for example, encompasses 240 square miles but has only 220 students.

“I’m glad to see funding preserved for these smaller schools,” Allen said. “They were scraping the bottom of the barrel.”

SB 1069, the K-12 budget, sets aside \$750,000 to be divided between schools considered to be “geographically isolated,” meaning they are located at least 30 miles from another district or have a school on an island making consolidation virtually impossible.

“It is important that we provide the necessary education to our youth,” Allen said. “If these schools were to close their doors, students would be forced to spend over 12 hours of their day going to school, including travel time, and that is not acceptable.”

Schools that will benefit from Section 22 funding include: Burt Township Schools in Grand Marais, Beaver Island Schools on Beaver Island, Bois Blanc Pines Schools on Bois Blanc Island, DeTour Area Schools in DeTour, Whitefish Point School in Paradise, and Mackinac Island Schools on Mackinac Island.

“These schools have already made deep budget cuts,” Allen said. “Children should not be penalized because of the communities they live in and the schools they attend. Every child has a right to a quality education no matter where they live.”

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